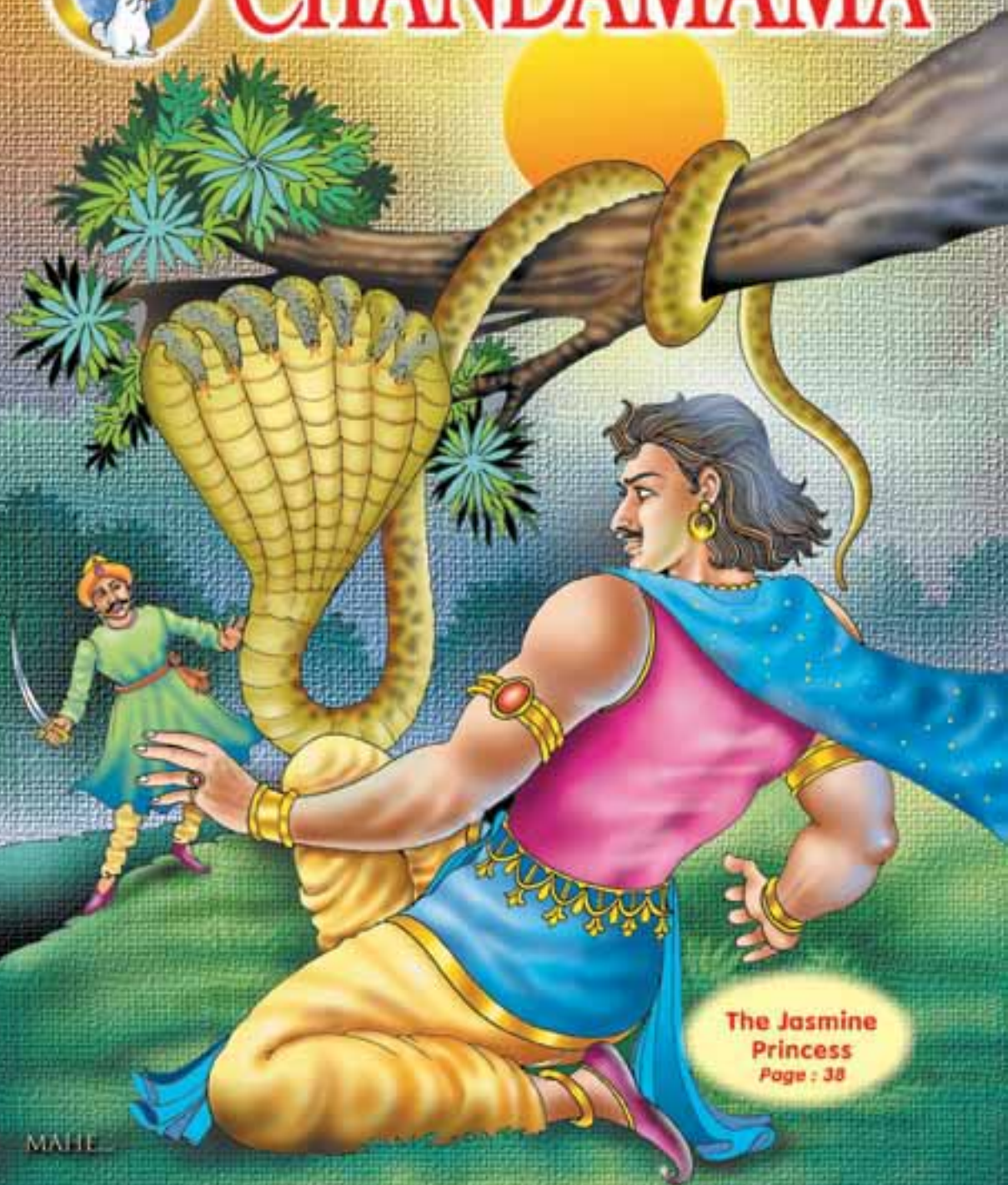




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# CHANDAMAMA



**The Jasmine  
Princess**  
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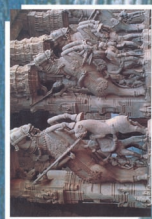


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No. 82, Defence Officers Colony  
Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097  
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a. Sailorman ☐ b. Tailorman ☐  
c. Cobblerman ☐
2. What's Popeye's source of strength?  
a. Roast Beef ☐ b. Hotdogs ☐  
c. Spinach ☐
3. What's Popeye's girlfriend's name?  
a. Olive Oyl ☐ b. Coconut Oyl ☐  
c. Sunflower Oyl ☐

Now dash this contest form to:  
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My name is: \_\_\_\_\_  
I am a Boy ☐ Girl ☐. I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old  
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I read Chandamama in English ☐ Hindi ☐  
Others ☐ (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Rules and regulations:

1. Judges decision is final and binding.
2. Incomplete forms will not be considered.
3. Prizes are not exchangeable in lieu of cash.
4. All entries should reach us by 15th May 2002.

Rs. 295 onwards.

**DASH!**

Wow watches from Titan





**What is the name of the  
serpent Mahavishnu lies on?  
Who wrote the Thiruppavai?  
What is the name of the discus that  
Mahavishnu holds?**

*For answers to these and other questions, pick up*

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## *A Thought for Earth Day*

*We* all live on the earth and enjoy the benefits it gives—the soil, the wealth that lies beneath, the plants that grow on the soil, the water mass which is a part of the earth, and the animals and birds who keep us company. We enjoy all this as long as we live. Which means we are only tenants on the earth.

But we often behave as though we are the absolute owners and we can do whatever we like with the earth. We do not realise that we have to share equitably with others all that we enjoy. However, human greed has always resulted in damage and desecration of the earth. If people start destroying the earth, its wealth will get depleted and those who are permitted to enjoy it will only suffer.

The latest threat is from biological weapons by which humans destroy not only their counterparts but all the other living beings on the earth including the flora and fauna. It is the earth that takes the brunt. The soil, water, and the atmosphere all get polluted. Life almost comes to a standstill.

Generations have lived on the earth for millions of years. Today many species of life have become extinct. Many others are on the verge of extinction.

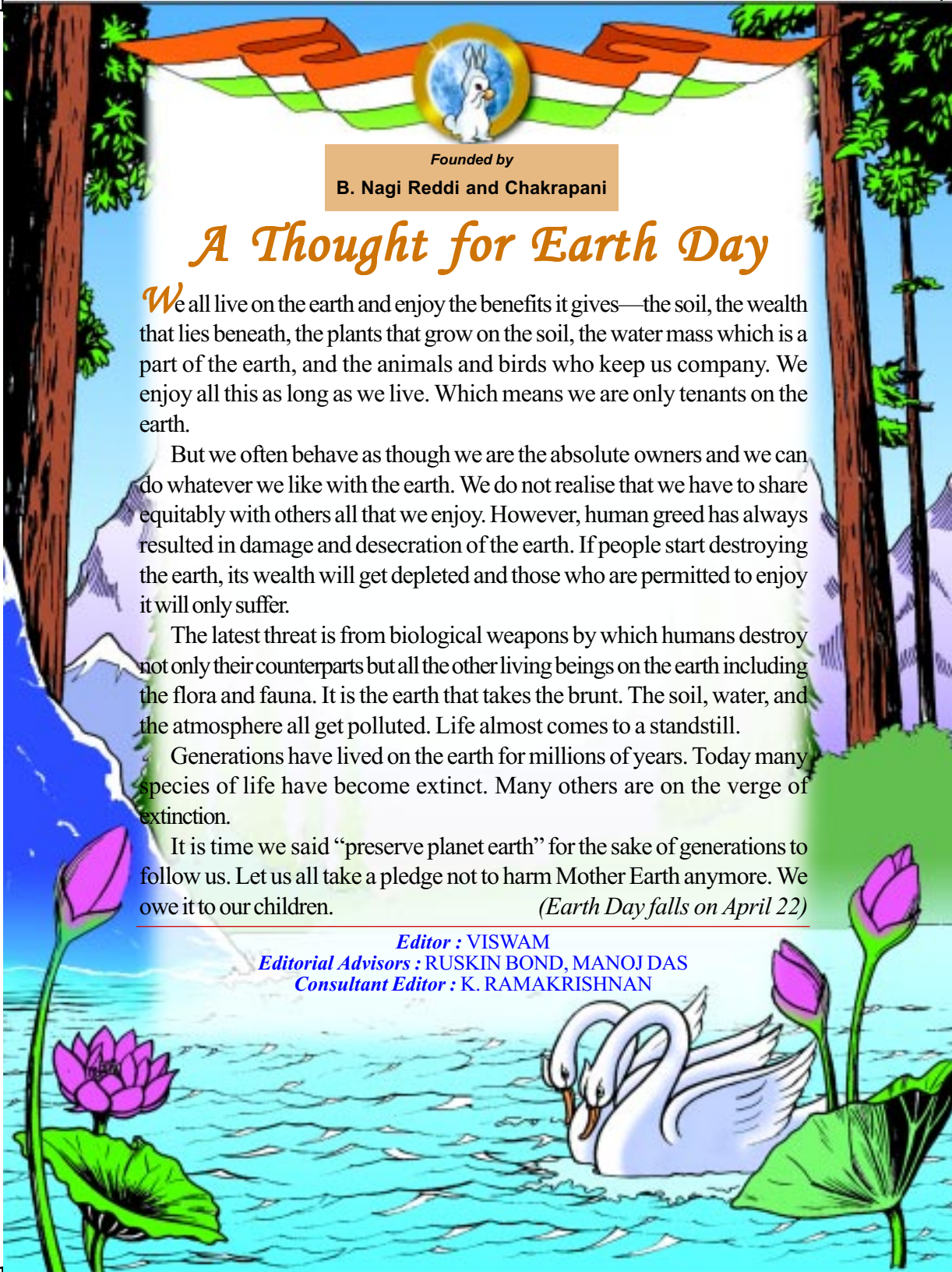
It is time we said “preserve planet earth” for the sake of generations to follow us. Let us all take a pledge not to harm Mother Earth anymore. We owe it to our children.

*(Earth Day falls on April 22)*

***Editor : VISWAM***

***Editorial Advisors : RUSKIN BOND, MANOJ DAS***

***Consultant Editor : K. RAMAKRISHNAN***



*Enter the Heroes of India Quiz and win fabulous prizes*

# Heroes of India - 7

India has a rich tradition of classical music. Here are some of our musical heroes. How many can you recognise?

**Three**  
***all correct entries***  
***will receive bicycles***  
***as awards.\****



**1** One of the trinity of Carnatic Music, he composed 24,000 songs. His samadhi is at Tiruvaiyaru on the banks of River Cauvery. Do you know his name?

**2** This legendary tabla wizard earned a distinctive place for the instrument. His son Zakir Hussain is also an equally acclaimed tabla artiste. Who is he?

**3** This famous musician decorated the court of Emperor Akbar. When he sang Raag Deepak, lamps would light up on their own. Do you remember his name?

**4** He is the unsurpassed maestro of shehnai. He was awarded the Bharat Ratna last year. Who are we talking about?

**5** He was a wealthy man called Srinivasa Naik, who later renounced the world. He laid the foundation for Carnatic music. Can you guess his name?

Fill in the blanks next to each question legibly. Which of these five is your favourite hero and why? Write 10 words on

**My favourite musical hero is**

.....

Name of participant:.....

.....Age:.....Class:.....

Address:.....

.....

Pin:.....Ph:.....

Signature of participant:.....

Signature of parent:.....

Please tear off the page and mail it to

**Heroes of India Quiz-7**

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On/before **May 5, 2002**

## Instructions

1. The contest is open to children in the age group 8-14 years.
2. \*Three winners will be selected for this contest from entries in all the language editions. **Winners will receive bicycles of appropriate size.** If there are more than one all correct entries, winners will be selected on the basis of the best description of **My favourite hero.**
3. The judges' decision will be final.
4. No correspondence will be entertained in this regard.
5. The winners will be intimated by post.

***Prizes brought  
to you by***





## What's so special?

**"F**ifty akse (an old Turkish gold coin) for this fine bird! Come, buy this unique bird for 50 akse!" a man called out at the marketplace of Alsehir, as the Hodja wandered into the market on his donkey. A large crowd had gathered around the man to look at this wonderful bird that he was selling.

Naseeruddin Hodja pushed his way through the crowd to get a look at the bird the man was trying to sell. It looked quite ordinary to the Hodja, and he wondered why the man was asking for 50 akse when, at a nearby stall, a chicken was being sold for a mere 5 akse.

"My dear fellow," he said to the bird-seller, "what's so wonderful about this bird for which you want 50 akse?"

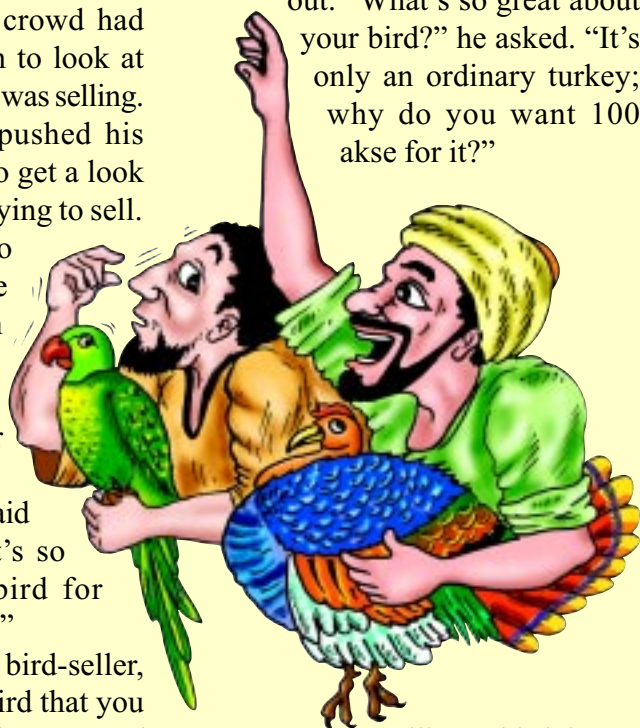
"Effendi," replied the bird-seller, "this is not an ordinary bird that you find in every nook and corner of Alsehir. This is a parrot and she is very special."

"What's so special about this bird? It looks like any other bird," declared the Hodja.

"Effendi, this bird is called a PARROT and it can speak!" said the bird-seller.

The Hodja suddenly got an idea. He went home, took his turkey from the coop, and returned to the market. He now stationed himself near the man selling the parrot and called out loudly: "Come, buy this beautiful bird for only 100 akse!"

The other bird-seller was quite put out. "What's so great about your bird?" he asked. "It's only an ordinary turkey; why do you want 100 akse for it?"



"But you're selling a bird for 50 akse, aren't you?" countered the Hodja.

"But, as I told you, my bird can speak! What can *your* bird do but gobble?" the man queried with a smirk.

"Ah!" said the Hodja. "My bird can think!"

# NBSAaaanP's Tales



It was early morning and Ali was getting ready for school, packing his bag, and gulping down breakfast. His school in one of the Andaman islands was almost two kilometres away from home. But it was a distance that he,

all of ten years, covered easily every day. The route that he took passed through his village, and then hugged the shoreline almost up to where his school was. He would often wander up to the waters' edge, especially on

## CATCHING CORAL THIEVES



MAHE.



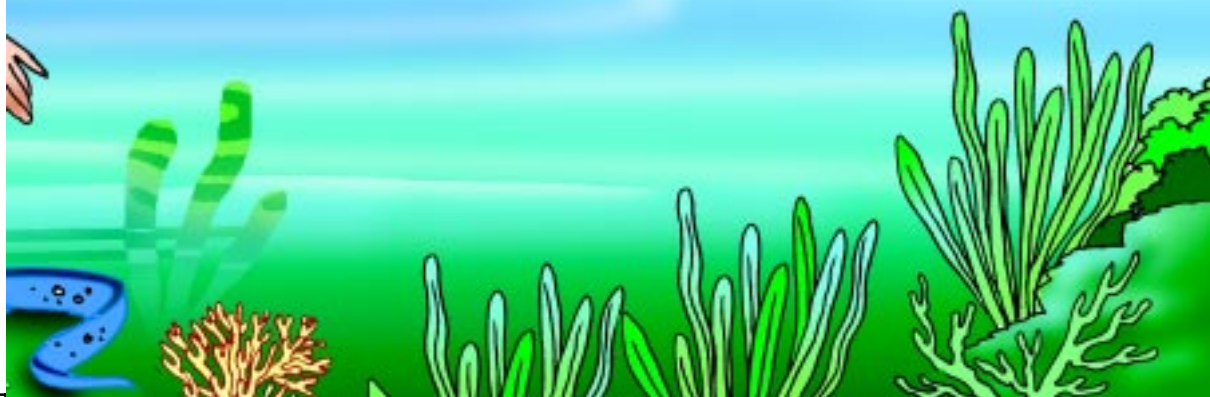
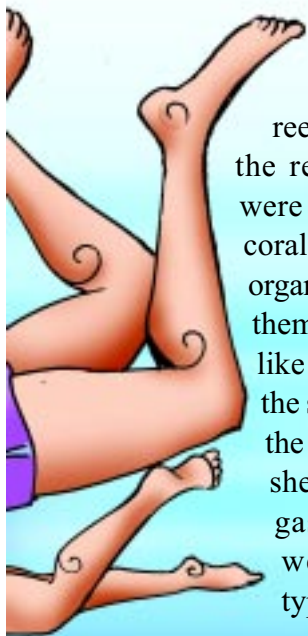
his way back home, to chase hermit crabs back into their burrows, or to look for starfish that might have been washed ashore.

There was very little of the natural world that Ali knew of, until a few weeks ago when some persons from an environmental group took his class on a trip to the beach. There, he and his friends were shown the multitude of sea creatures that lived around

them. With the help of snorkels, they got glimpses of the coral reefs and the kind of life the reefs supported. They were amazed to learn that corals were actually living organisms! What seemed to them as lifeless, hard rock-like colonies was actually the skeleton that protected the animal, much like the shell of the turtle. They gasped in awe as they were shown different types of corals, and the

creatures that lived around the coral colonies, like parrot fishes, sea anemones, star fishes, eels, and so on. What fascinated Ali in particular were the tiny creatures called “christmas trees”, as colourful and varied as the decorated and gift-laden trees he had seen in picture-books. These creatures were attached to corals, and when Ali put his hand out to touch them, they immediately withdrew, as if sensing danger!

Ali had felt a surge of pride as he listened to the environmental educators speak about the natural wealth they had. Coral reefs are found in India mainly in Lakshadweep, the Gulfs of Kutch and Mannar, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. But as the session progressed, Ali was pained to hear how coral reefs suffered damage from careless tourists who pulled them out to take back as show-pieces for their drawing rooms, from sewage and industrial chemicals that made their way to the reef, and from oil spills. “They must remain if our

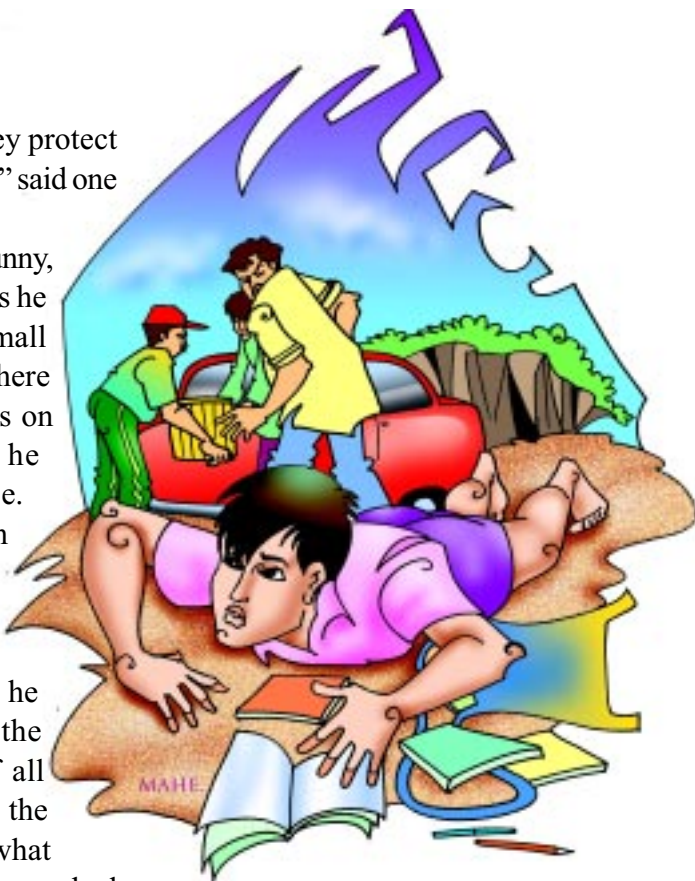


islands are to remain, as they protect our islands from sea erosion,” said one of the educators.

The day was warm and sunny, and Ali set off for school. As he walked along, he saw a small white car in the distance. There were not too many vehicles on his island, and this one he definitely did not recognise. There were three men alongside the car and they seemed to be busy loading something into the boot. As Ali approached the car, he was horrified to see that the boot was full of corals of all kinds. As he began to ask the men who they were and what they were doing, one of them punched him and then pushed him aside. The three then quickly jumped into the car and drove off.

Ali got up to his feet to catch a last glimpse of the car speeding away. It took him a few minutes to gather himself together. He had never in his life been hit and pushed around before, but that did not make him angry as much as the sight of all that coral being taken away. ‘I must report them, I must, I must!’ he thought to himself, and immediately turned around and ran back to his village.

At the grocery shop, he asked the



shopkeeper whether he could borrow his bicycle and, on receiving a nod, he jumped on to it, slung his school bag across the handle bar, and cycled away in the direction of the neighbouring village. He covered the distance of 4 km as fast as he could, with only one thought repeating itself in his mind: ‘The corals must remain if our islands are to remain.’ He recalled the words of the educator some days ago.

At the neighbouring village, Ali cycled straight to the only shop that had a telephone booth. He made a call to the environmental educators who



had visited his school (luckily he had their numbers in his school bag!), and told them of the white car full of corals in the boot. Having done what he could, Ali cycled back to his village to return the cycle to the shopkeeper.

The next day, as school was in progress, Ali's class had a stream of visitors. The school headmaster brought in a local government official, besides the team of environmental educators, and two journalists from the local newspaper! One of the educators, who had received Ali's call, described the events of the previous day to the class. The description of the car was given to the

police, who immediately flashed it across to all their checkposts. The men were apprehended with all the coral, and it transpired that they were planning to ship it to Kolkata, where it would find a buyer's market.

The entire class broke into a spontaneous applause as they listened to Ali's adventure, and the applause grew louder as the journalists interviewed and photographed him. 'It's a big day for me, but a bigger one for the coral reefs,' thought Ali.

*- Sujatha Padmanabhan  
(Based on a true incident)*

*Courtesy: The National Biodiversity  
Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and  
Kalpavriksh*





# THE BIG RACE

— *Ruskin Bond*

**D**awn crept quietly over the sleeping town. Only a cock was aware of it, and crowed. Koki heard a soft tapping on the windowpane, and immediately sat up in bed. She was 10 years old. Her hair fell about her shoulders in a disorderly fashion, and her dark eyes were slightly ringed, but she was wide awake and listening. She heard the tapping again.

Koki got out of bed and tiptoed to the window and unlatched it. Ranji was standing outside, looking somewhat disgruntled.

“Come on!” he said. “It’s nearly time.”

Koki put a finger to her lips, for she did not want her parents and grandmother to wake up.

“You go and call Bhim,” she whispered. “I’ll meet you at the *maidaan*.”

Ranji hurried off in the

direction of Bhim’s house, and Koki turned from the window and went to the dressing-table. She combed her hair carelessly and tied it roughly with a ribbon. She was excited and changed her dress in a hurry.

Very quietly, she pulled open a dressing-table drawer and brought out a cardboard box, which had little holes punctured all over. She opened the lid to see if Rajkumari was all right.

Rajkumari, a dumpy rhino beetle, was asleep on the core of an apple. Koki did not disturb her. She closed the box and, barefoot, crept out of the house through the back door.

As soon as she was outside, Koki broke into a run. She did not stop until she reached the *maidaan*.

On the playground, the slanting rays of the early morning sun were just beginning to make emeralds of the dew-drops. Later in the day, the grass would be dry and prickly to the feet, but now,



it was cool and soft. A group of boys had gathered at one corner of the maidaan, talking excitedly. Among them were Ranji and Bhim, a lanky, bespectacled boy of fourteen. Koki was the lone girl.

Bhim's beetle was the favourite for the race; it was a large bamboo beetle with a slim body and long, slender legs, rather like its master's. It was called 1990. Ranji's beetle was a stone carrier, with what looked like a very long pair of whiskers. It was appropriately named Moocha (moustaches). Koki's beetle was not half as big as the other two. Though she did not know how to tell its sex, she was sure it was a female and had called it Rajkumari—princess.

There were only three contestants. Betting was not allowed, but the boys made a few quiet bets among themselves. The prize was a giant insect (there was some disagreement as to whether it was a beetle or an outsize cockroach), which was meant to enable the winner to breed racing beetles on a large scale.

There was some confusion when Ranji's Moocha escaped from his box

and took a preliminary canter over the grass; but he was soon caught and returned to his enclosure. Moocha appeared to be in good form; in fact, he was the hot favourite to win the race.

The course was about six feet long, the tracks six inches wide. They were fenced with strips of cardboard, so that the contestants did not get into each other's way or leave the course altogether. They were held at the starting-post by another piece of cardboard, which would be placed behind them as soon as the race began—just to make sure that no one backed out.

A little Sikh boy, in a yellow pyjama and matching jibba, was acting as the starter. He kept blowing his whistle for order and attention. When the onlookers saw



that the race was about to begin, they fell silent. The little Sikh boy then announced the rules of the race: the contestants were not to be touched during the race, or blown at from behind, or enticed forward with bits of food. They could, however, be cheered on as loudly as anyone wished.

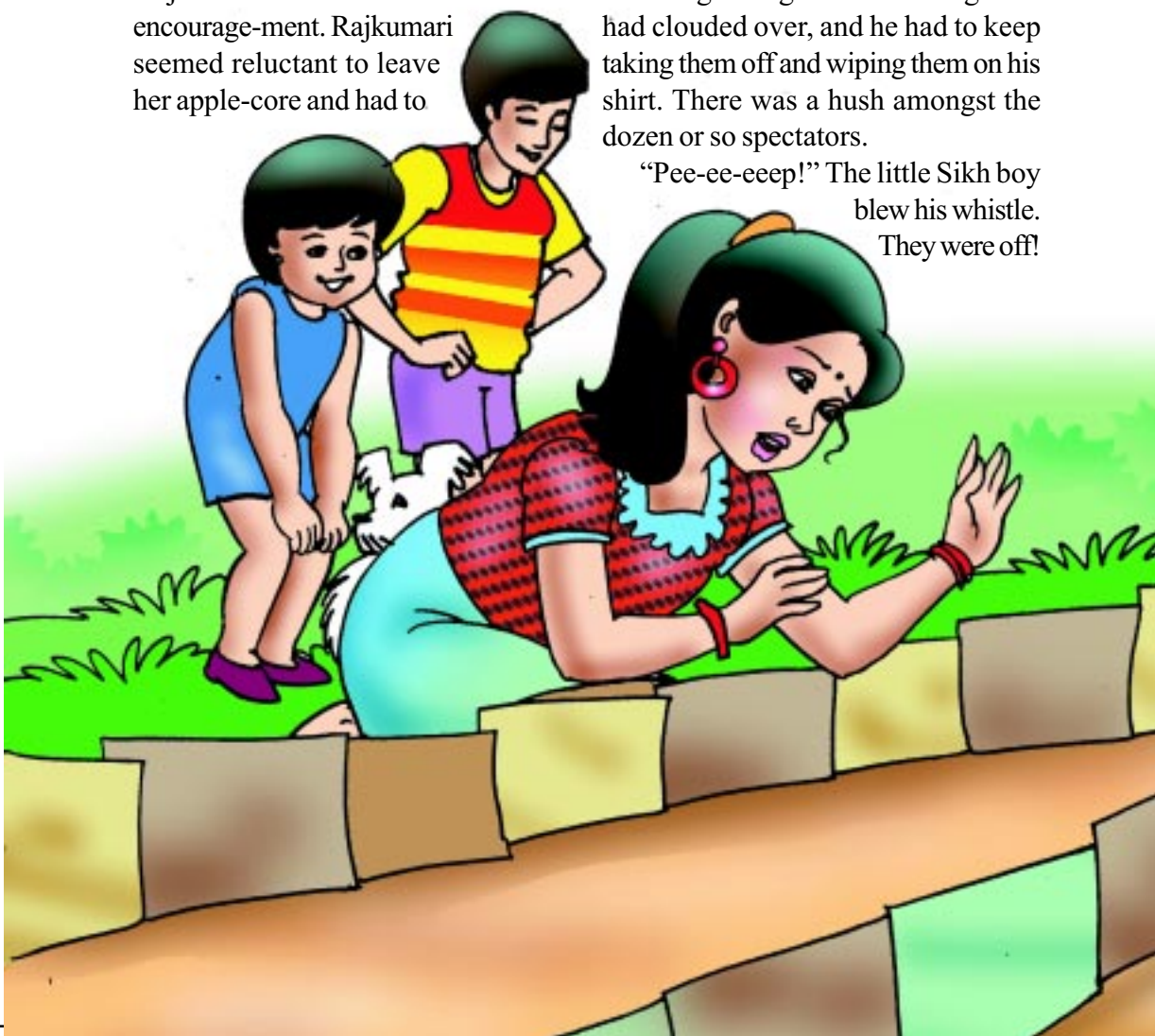
Moocha and 1990 were already at the starting-post, while Koki was giving Rajkumari a few words of encouragement. Rajkumari seemed reluctant to leave her apple-core and had to

be taken forcibly to the starting-post.

There was further delay when Moocha and 1990 got their horns and whiskers entangled. They had to be separated and calmed down, before being placed in their respective tracks. The race was about to start.

Koki knelt on the grass, very quiet and serious, looking from Rajkumari to the finishing-line and back again. Ranji was biting his finger-nails. Bhim's glasses had clouded over, and he had to keep taking them off and wiping them on his shirt. There was a hush amongst the dozen or so spectators.

"Pee-ee-eeep!" The little Sikh boy blew his whistle. They were off!





Or rather, Moocha and 1990 were off. Rajkumari was still at the starting-post, wondering what had happened to her apple-core.

Everyone was cheering madly, and Ranji was jumping up and down, and Bhim's glasses had been knocked off. Moocha was going at a spanking rate. 1990 wasn't taking a great deal of interest in the proceedings, but he was moving and anything could happen in a race like this.

Koki was on the verge of tears. All the coaching she had given to Rajkumari seemed to be of no avail. Her beetle was still looking bewildered and hurt.

"Stop sulking," said Koki. "I won't keep you if you don't try."

Then Moocha stopped suddenly,

about two feet from the finishing line. He seemed to be having trouble with his whiskers, and kept twitching them this way and that, while 1990 was catching up inch by inch, and both Ranji and Bhim were shouting themselves hoarse. Nobody paid any attention to Rajkumari, who was considered to be out of the race; but Koki was using all her will power in order to get her racer going.

As 1990 approached, he seemed to sense his rival's trouble, and stopped to find out what the matter was. They could not see each other over the cardboard fence, but otherwise appeared to be communicating very well. Ranji and Bhim were





becoming quite frantic, and the cheering from all sides was deafening.

Rajkumari, goaded with rage and frustration at having been deprived of her apple-core, now took it into her head to make a bid for liberty and new pastures, and rushed forward in great style.

Koki shouted with joy, but the others did not notice the new challenge until Rajkumari had drawn level with her conferring rivals. There was a gasp from the crowd, as Rajkumari strode across the finishing-line in record time.

Everyone cheered the gallant outsider. Ranji and Bhim very sportingly shook Koki by the hand, congratulating her on Rajkumari's victory. The little Sikh boy in the yellow pyjama suit blew his whistle for silence and presented Koki with her prize.

Koki gazed in rapture at the new

beetle—or was it a cockroach? She stroked its back with her thumb. The insect did not seem to mind. Then, lest Rajkumari should feel jealous, Koki closed the prize-box and, picking up her victorious beetle, returned her to the apple-core.

The crowd began to break up. Ranji decided that he would trim Moocha's whiskers before the next race, and Bhim thought 1990 was in need of a special diet.

"Just wait till next Sunday," said Ranji. "Then watch my Moocha leave the rest of you standing!"

Bhim said nothing. He looked very thoughtful. There were some new training methods which he was going to try out in the coming days.

Koki walked home, the cardboard boxes under each arm. Her thoughts were busy with the future. She would breed beetles (or would they be cockroaches?) until she had a stable of about twenty. Her racers would win every event, both here and in the next town. They might make her famous. Beetle-racing would become a national sport!

Meanwhile, she was happy, and Rajkumari was happy on the apple-core, and the new insect (but what if he's a cockroach, and do cockroaches breed with beetles? wondered Koki) was just being an insect and did not care about anything, except how to get out of that wretched box!

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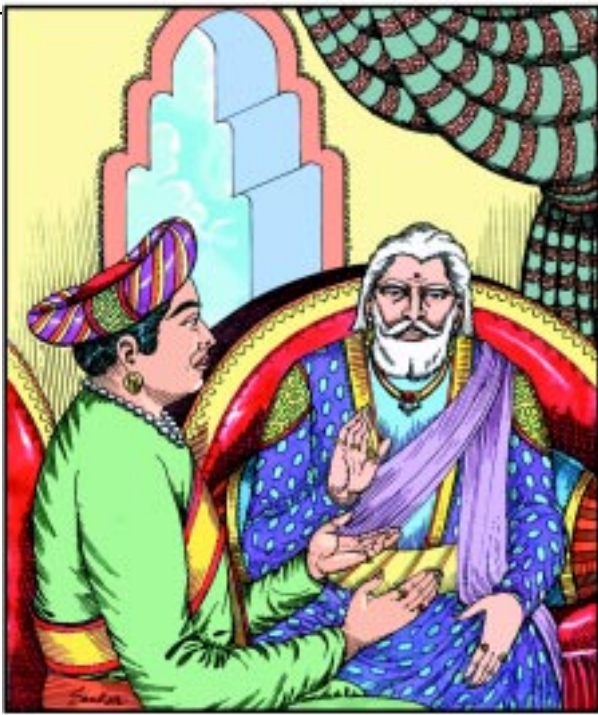


New tales of  
King Vikram  
and the Vetala

## The King's renouncement

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. But King Vikram swerved not. He again went near the tree and pulled the corpse down, put it on his shoulders and started for the cremation ground. The vampire inside the corpse then said, "You come to this ghastly cremation ground alone and fearlessly every time. This is a land of ghosts and vampires and is full of danger. Your action makes me wonder what you seek. In my view





what you are doing is very foolish. There are times when even a learned person does not know what to do. For example, listen to this story of King Satyakirti.” The Vetala then began narrating the story of Satyakirti:

Long ago, King Satyakirti ruled the kingdom of Varal. He was an able administrator and ruled wisely. All his subjects lived happily and peacefully under his reign. But as the years flew by, he lost interest in administration. His body craved for rest. When he realised that his work was slackening, he thought, “I have become old and should not rule the kingdom anymore. It is time I retired from the service of my people.”

Satyakirti had four sons and all of them were learned and talented. After consulting his ministers and well-wishers, the king had his eldest son, Rambhadra, crowned as the king.

The queen had died two years ago and the king now felt lonely in the palace. He decided to take the path of bhakthi to salvation. He began devoting his time and energy to achieve this end. But he lacked concentration. He would often get distracted. He became worried. “Why is my mind wandering like this? I’m not able to concentrate on God. I think I’ll spend the rest of my life in the company of saints in their ashram. This will help me attain *mukthi*,” thought the king. He then informed his decision to Brihaspathi Bhat, a pundit who visited him regularly.

Brihaspathi Bhat appreciated the king’s decision, “Your majesty, you have taken the correct decision. One can attain salvation only in the company of saints and sages. A few days in their company will help you focus on your goal.”

In spite of this encouragement, the king hesitated. He debated within himself. Then he told Brihaspathi Bhat, “You’re right. But from birth I’ve lived in luxury and changing my lifestyle now will be difficult. Life in an ashram will be very austere. I shall have to observe



rules strictly. I wonder if I'll be able to follow all that. Will I fail the test?"

Brihaspathi then answered smilingly, "My lord, you mustn't worry about that. It will be difficult initially, but then you'll get used to it in due course. You can then concentrate on attaining *mukthi*. I'm confident that you'll succeed."

Brihaspathi's words encouraged the king, but he was not fully satisfied. He said, "Sage Sadhanand has an ashram in Champakavan, near our capital. I shall spend a few days there. That will show me if I can spend the rest of my days in an ashram."

Brihaspathi approved of this idea and the king made all the arrangements necessary for his stay. He then left the palace along with two attendants to Champakavan.

In Champakavan, a small hut had been erected near that of Sage Sadhanand. A soft bed was laid out and a variety of fruits were stocked there. A small area for pooja was also kept ready. Pictures of gods and goddesses were hung neatly on the wall. All the articles necessary for the king's daily pooja rituals were made available.

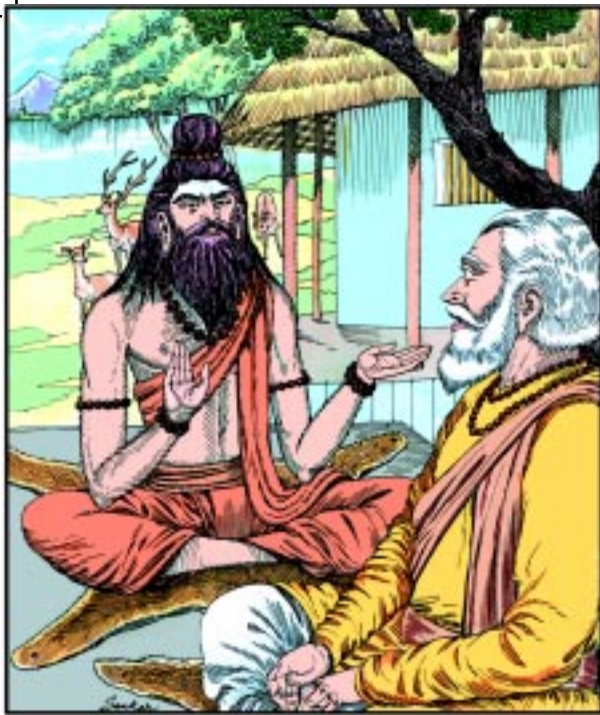
King Satyakirti appreciated and thanked all those who had prepared his hut and sent them back to the palace, retaining just the two who had



accompanied him. At night he ate his dinner and took rest. He got up early in the morning and went to see Sage Sadhanand. At the ashram, he saw the sage deep in meditation under a mango tree.

Satyakirti did not want to disturb the sage; he sat down quietly on a platform close by and waited for the sage to open his eyes. He waited for hours for the sage to come out of his meditation. The king was observing the natural scenery around the hermitage when he heard someone address him. It was Sage Sadhanand. The king paid his respects to the sage.

Sage Sadhanand beckoned to the king to take a seat close by and asked



him in a soft voice, "Have all your servants left?"

Satyakirti was ashamed and answered humbly, "After setting up the hut they have all left for the capital. I have just two of them with me here. When I get used to the life of the ashram, I shall send them back. You know pretty well, I've been a king all my life, accustomed to all the comforts of life. It is difficult to give up all the comforts at the same time."

Sage Sadhanand listened patiently to the king's story and the purpose of his visit. He then asked, "So you've been here for sometime. How did you spend your time here?"

Satyakirti replied, "I was getting

bored. So I started looking around Champakavan. Suddenly I had an idea."

"What was it?" asked Sadhanand.

"O revered one, Champakavan is full of trees and plants, and many of them are valuable medicinal herbs. I was wondering if I could call the royal physician and ask him to identify which of these could be used to cure diseases. He could use these plants to prepare antidotes for diseases."

On hearing this, Sage Sadhanand said, "O king! You are a learned and wise man. Do you believe that closing your eyes and meditating is the only way to attain salvation?"

Satyakirti did not know what to reply and remained silent. The sage continued, "Please return to the capital immediately and lead a royal life. Use your experience as a king for the benefit and upliftment of your subjects."

Without answering, Satyakirti left the ashram with the blessings of the sage.

Completing the story, Vetala addressed King Vikram, "O King, Sage Sadhanand had called King Satyakirti a wise and learned man. Without advising the king on how to give up the material life or on meditation, he told him to return to the capital. I feel that what Sage Sadhanand did was not quite right.

A sage is one who has renounced

all things; his only aim is to seek enlightenment. Generally these sages are egoistic, so it is understandable that Sage Sadhanand advised the King to return.

But the King could have persuaded the sage to show him the right path or at least requested permission to undertake meditation. But he left as soon as the sage advised him to go back. Was not the king strong-minded enough? His desire to attain mukthi would now remain only a desire. Why did the king accept the sage's decision without questioning? If you know the answer and yet keep quiet, your head will break into a thousand pieces."

King Vikram answered immediately, "It is believed that the best service is service to mankind. For ages King Satyakirti had been doing just that. But when he grew old and weak, he decided to retire. He thought of

meditation and renouncing worldly things. He thought that this was the only way to attain *mukthi*. But this was only due to his ignorance. Sage Sadhanand hinted at this ignorance of the king. Doing one's duty will automatically lead to salvation. The king had instinctively done that when he had observed the medicinal properties of the vegetation in the forest. Also, remember that the king had retained two attendants with him. To become a recluse, one would have to relinquish all worldly things. Sage Sadhanand understood the King's nature and that's why he ordered him to go back to the capital. The King also understood the reason behind the sage's words and that's why he took the advice. It is foolish to believe that the sage was conceited."

As soon as King Vikram broke his silence, the corpse along with the Vetala went back to the tree.





# Know Your India

## Quiz

A majority of children would have finished their exams in April and they must be in a holiday mood, though some of them will have to wait for their schools to close. So, for this month, we will go for a mixed fare, rather than any specific topic. Ready?

1. Milka Singh made a world record in 400 metres in the Olympic Games. In which year and where was the Games held?
2. In 1900, Ida Scudder started a one-room clinic in a small town in South India. It is now a world famous institution. Name it.
3. Last year, India-born V.S.Naipaul won the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1971, he won the Booker Prize. Which of his books fetched him that award?
4. The first ever commercial flight in the Indian sub-continent took place in 1932 when J.R.D.Tata flew to Bombay. From where did he take off?
5. The Maha Kumbh Mela is held in four places in India, including Nasik, on the banks of a river. Name the river.
6. Who gave a speech in Hindi for the first time at the United Nations General Assembly in 1977?
7. The Royal Bengal Tiger is our National Animal. However, that distinction was earlier held by another animal. Which animal?
8. India established its first base in Antarctica in 1982. What is the name of the base?
9. Ronald Ross was working in a hospital in India when he identified the bacteria which causes Malaria. Which hospital?
10. For the first time in 200 years, a volcano erupted in India in 1991. Where did that happen?

*(Answers next month)*

## Answers to February Quiz

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Munis                               | 5. Ugrasena   |
| 2. Parvati, Girija                     | 6. Karkotaka  |
| 3. Ahalya, wife of rishi Gautama, Rama | 7. Gandhari, wife of King Dhritarashtra of Hastinapur |
| 4. Airavata                            | 8. Dandakaranya                                       |

# Saga of India

Glimpses of a great civilisation –  
its glorious quest for Truth through the ages

## 27. A novel way to teach



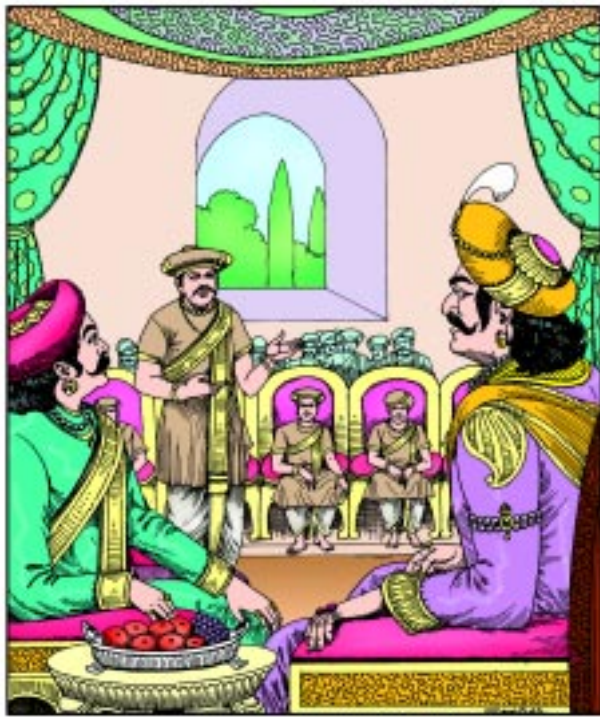
“Grandpa, would you then say that the *Brihat Katha* is the world’s first collection of tales?” Chameli asked Professor Devnath eagerly.

“Yes, my child,” confirmed the professor.

Chameli opened a magazine and drew the professor’s attention to an article. It was on another ancient book of stories, the *Panchatantra*. The author of the article had described the book as the first collection of tales written in India.

“If the *Brihat Katha* is the first collection of tales in the world, it had to be the first collection of tales in India, too. If the *Panchatantra* is the first collection of tales in India, it must have been older than the *Brihat Katha*. That means the *Panchatantra* is the oldest book of tales in the world!” commented Chameli.

“Well, Chameli, the author of this article is partly right and partly wrong. While Gunadhya’s *Brihat Katha* is considered older than the



*Panchatantra*, it is a lost property of humanity. The part of the book which we read today is *Kathasaritsagara*. This was written by Somadeva in the 11th century, whereas the *Panchatantra* was written in the 3rd century, if not earlier.” The professor paused for a while.

“Grandpa, you can continue after you’ve had your cup of tea; Sandip is bringing it,” said Chameli.

“Let it come, I’m in no hurry,” said Devanath. “As I was saying, there need not be any quarrel even between the *Kathasaritsagara* and the *Panchatantra*. Both are firsts in their own ways: the *Kathasaritsagara* is the first collection of tales; the

*Panchatantra* is the first collection of fables,” said the professor. “Great, indeed, was Vishnu Sharma. What a challenge he took up and how successfully he met it!”

“Challenge, did you say, Grandpa? You told us the story behind the origin of the *Brihat Katha*. Is there a story behind the origin of the *Panchatantra*, too?” asked Sandip who had, in the meanwhile, entered the professor’s room, with a cup of tea for him.

“There is,” said the professor and he gave the children the background of the work:

There was a kingdom called Mahilarupya, ruled by a king named Amarashakti. He should have been a happy king but for the conduct of his three sons. They were not bad boys, but they had one weakness - and quite a formidable weakness was that. They didn’t like to learn anything. They could not tolerate the sight of a teacher! The king tried his best to drive a little good sense into their thick skulls, but in vain.

One of the boys, after all, had to succeed him to the throne. How could he hand over the administration of the kingdom to a young man who refused to be educated? The king was worried, and he called the renowned scholars and thinkers of his kingdom and frankly placed his problem before them. “Please



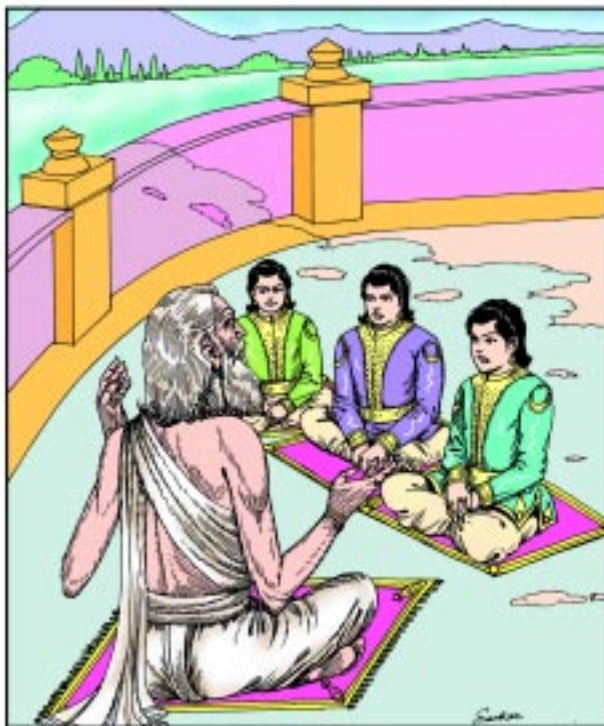
advise me how I can go about educating my sons,” he said.

The scholars made several suggestions, but none of them appeared to be practical. The king was about to give up hope when one of them advised him to consult Vishnu Sharma, a wise man who had highly original ways of solving knotty problems.

Vishnu Sharma went to the palace at the king’s invitation. The king must have been deeply impressed by his wit and knowledge. When the wise man took it upon himself to educate the three princes, the king offered him plenty of wealth. But Vishnu Sharma refused to accept any, saying, “I will not sell education. Besides, I’ve no use for wealth because I’m pretty old.”

Vishnu Sharma made friends with the boys and led them to a lonely spot, probably on the roof of the palace where the shade from a banyan tree fell. He began: “On the banks of the river Godavari stood a huge Shalmali tree to which birds from many a direction came to roost.”

And then he went on narrating story after story - of people, good and bad, of trust and treachery, cleverness and naivete, luck and the lack of it, crime and punishment, cunning and innocence. There were stories within stories, and one story led to another - a typical



ancient Indian style of story- telling which was later adopted in the *Arabian Nights*.

By the time the sage and scholar Vishnu Sharma ended his series of sessions with the princes, they stood educated, without realising that they had been taught! They were absorbed in the stories, and through these stories, the great teacher taught them politics, diplomacy, psychology, and sociology - all the subjects the princes ought to learn.

The term *Panchatantra* means Five Categories of Knowledge.

As the professor paused, Chameli pleaded with him sweetly, “Grandpa, won’t you care to tell us at least one story from this great book?”

“My child, I’m sure you know many of the stories from the *Panchatantra*. For example, don’t you know the story of the monkey which killed his sleeping master by trying to kill a fly that sat on his forehead? Don’t you remember the story of the turtle which remained hanging from a stick held by two swans and which fell to its death because it opened its mouth unnecessarily? Also, I am sure, you know the story of the three friends who knew the secret of reviving a dead lion without knowing how to protect themselves from it!”

“Of course, we know them. But are they all from the *Panchatantra*?” exclaimed Sandip.

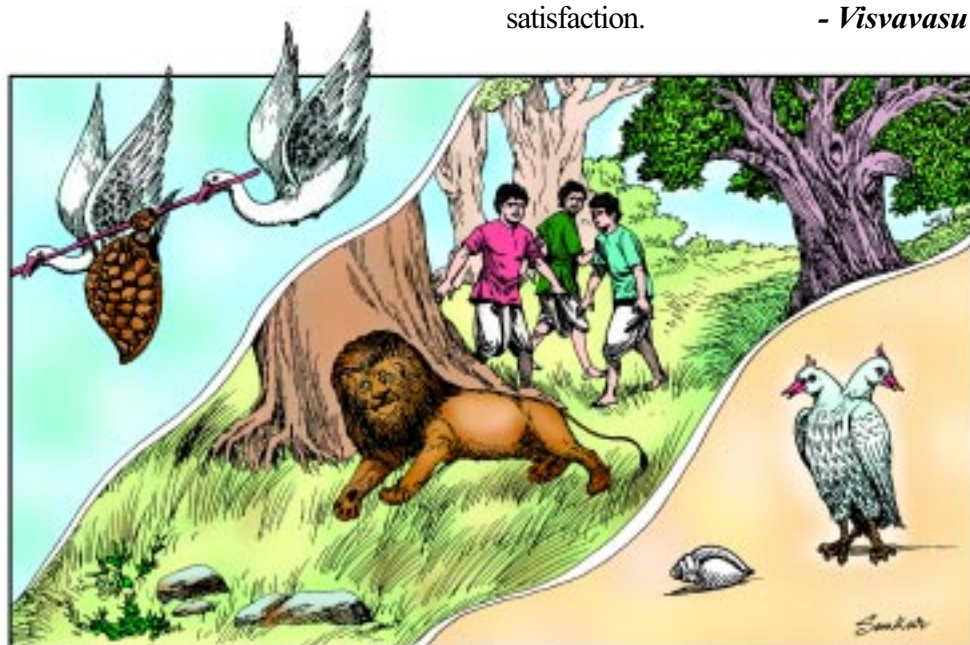
“They are! However, let me tell you the shortest story in the book - which is of most relevance to mankind today.

You’ve read reports of double-headed snakes and even a human child born with two heads? Well, the *Panchatantra* tells us that once there was a bird with two heads. The heads were so situated on the body that they looked in opposite directions. One day, one head found some nectar in a shell. The second head wanted a share of it, but was refused. Soon the second head found some poison and drank it. Since both the heads belonged to the same body, the poison killed the two-headed bird,” said the professor and looked meaningfully at his grandchildren.

“We understand. Mankind belongs to a single earth. Such is the situation today that any thoughtless action by one country on the earth could endanger the entire earth,” said Sandip.

Professor Devnath smiled with satisfaction.

- *Visvvasu*



# Festivals of India

## *New Year in April !*

*For many Indian communities, the Gregorian month of April is very special. It marks the beginning of a New Year to people in many parts of the country. It is also celebrated as a harvest festival.*



## *Baisakhi*

For Punjabis, Baisakhi, which occurs on April 13 (and rarely on April 14), is the beginning of the year. It is also a harvest festival.

The rabi crop is ready for harvest; the fields are a lush green and heavy with the grains. It is a season of plenty. Naturally, the mood of the people in the villages is one of joy. What better thing

to do than to celebrate, to sing and dance?

That's what Baisakhi is all about. It is a community festival. The men and women dance the robust and energetic *bhangra* and *gidda*.

People wear bright coloured traditional dresses for the festival.

Traditionally the festivities take place on the banks of rivers. People eat *rotis* made out of freshly ground *atta* (wheat flour) along with *desi* ghee and *gud* (jaggery). On the whole, it is a day of merry-making and feasting. A bonfire is lit, and the dances are performed around it.

For the Sikhs, Baisakhi also marks the beginning of the Khalsa movement. It was on this day, that the tenth Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh, initiated the Khalsa movement or the Sikh brotherhood in 1699.

April 2002





# Gudi Padwa

*Gudi Padwa* is the New Year of the people of Maharashtra. It is celebrated on the first day of the month of Chaitra. This too is a harvest festival. It is an occasion when new ventures are started.

On this day, people display the *gudi*, a symbol of victory, in their courtyards. The *gudi* is a *kalash* or pot inverted over a pole, that is wrapped in silk cloth and adorned with marigold flowers and mango leaves. It is believed that the *gudi* will ward off evil and usher in prosperity. It also celebrates nature's bounty. The *gudi* is put up at sunrise and it remains till sunset.



The day is celebrated by wearing new clothes and participating in a feast. The thresholds are adorned with colourful *rangoli*. Early in the day, the people eat a traditional mixture of a paste of neem leaves, ajwain, tamarind, and jaggery. It is believed that the paste is capable of purifying the blood.

Maharashtrians believe that it was on this day that Lord Rama defeated the monkey-prince, Vali. Some people also believe that the festival commemorates the day Lord Vishnu incarnated as a fish (*Matsyavantara*) to protect the Earth.



# Naba Barsha

The first day of the month of Baisakh is celebrated with great pomp and gaiety as New Year's Day by Bengalis. It is also called Poila Baisakh. Beautiful *rangoli* on thresholds, a holy *kalash* or a pot filled with holy water and decorated with mango leaves and coconut, and yummy sweets are part of the festival.

# Rongali Bihu

Rongali Bihu, the Assamese New Year, occurs in mid-April. It is considered the beginning of the new agricultural year and marks the time for sowing. This is also known as Bohag Bihu and is the most colourful of the several Bihus that the Assamese celebrate every year.

Merry-making and fun mark an important aspect of the festival.

Young girls and boys dance the famous Bihu dance to traditional *Bihugeets* or folk songs at community gatherings. This dance is accompanied



by traditional instruments like *dhol*, drum, and *pepa*, which is a pipe made of buffalo horn.



# Vishu

The Malayalee New Year is known as *Vishu*. It is the first day of the first Malayalam month of *Medam* (April– May). The celebrations are marked by the custom of seeing the *Vishukani* or the auspicious sight.

The things that signify prosperity, like raw rice, new clothes, gold, cucumber, betel leaves, arecanut, mirror, yellow flowers '*konna*' (cassia fistula), holy texts, and coins are placed in a vessel of bell metal called the '*uruli*'. This is the *kani*. The *kani* is arranged by the eldest woman in the family the night before Vishu. It is



believed that all those who see it early in the morning of Vishu can look forward to a prosperous year.

People wear *kodi vastram* or new clothes on the occasion. The elder members of the family distribute coins and sweets to all those who seek their

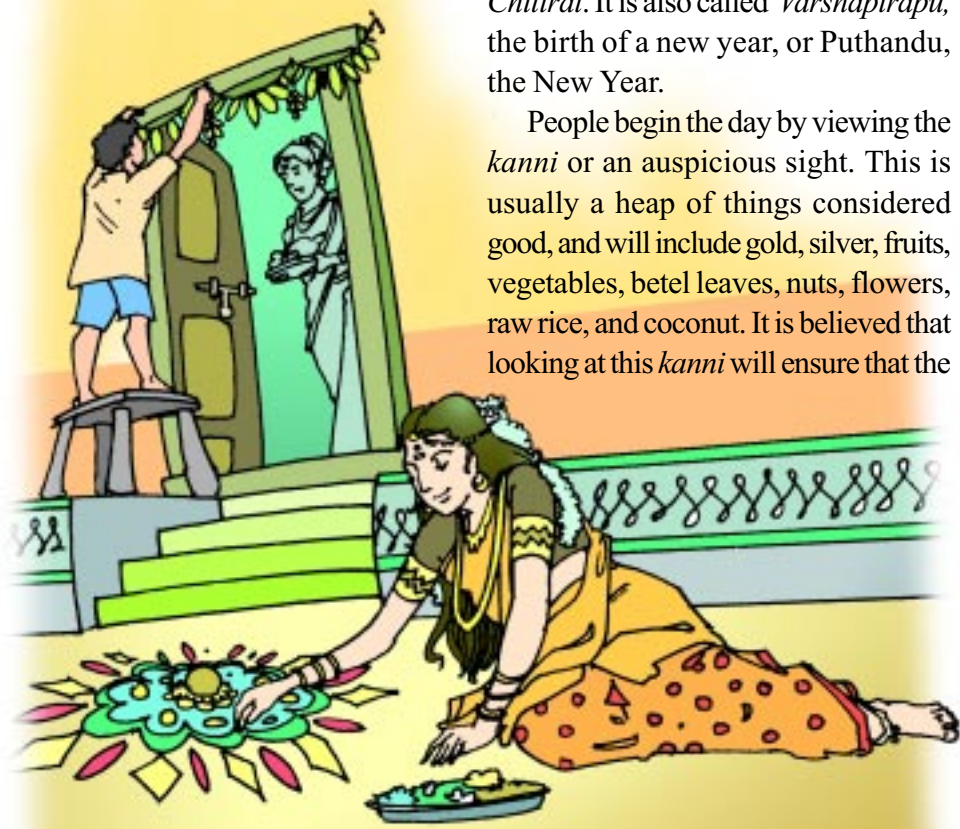
blessings on this day. This is known as *Vishukaineetam*. The youngsters usually love this tradition, and call on their elders to make a collection. The money thus collected is then spent in the fair called *Vishuwela*. It is a day of feasting and merry-making.



## *Puthandu*

The Tamils celebrate New Year's day on April 14, which also marks the beginning of the month of *Chitirai*. It is also called *Varshapirapu*, the birth of a new year, or Puthandu, the New Year.

People begin the day by viewing the *kanni* or an auspicious sight. This is usually a heap of things considered good, and will include gold, silver, fruits, vegetables, betel leaves, nuts, flowers, raw rice, and coconut. It is believed that looking at this *kanni* will ensure that the





entire year will bring prosperity and good luck.

On this day, people visit temples and read the *panchangam* or the almanac. The highlight of the festival lunch is invariably the *maangai pachadi*, a dish made of raw mango, new neem flowers,

and jaggery. It is sweet, bitter, and sour at the same time. It is believed to represent the ups and downs one faces in life.

The entrances to houses are adorned with *kolams*, designs made of rice flour, and a *thoranam* or garland of mango leaves.



## Ugadi

New Year's Day in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka is called Ugadi. The Telugu New Year commences from the Chaitra Sudha Panchami. It also heralds the beginning of the Vasant Ritu or the spring. The fields that were barren for some months now blossom.

The word Ugadi is a combination of *yuga* (era) and *aadi* (beginning). A popular belief is that Brahma the creator, according to the Hindu mythology, started creation on this auspicious day. The day thus became the first day of the year. It is considered auspicious to start new ventures on this day.

Houses are decorated with *thorans* or strings of mango leaves. People wear new clothes and visit temples and, in the evening, read the *panchangam*.

People make and eat the *Ugadi*



*Pachadi*, which is a mixture of fresh tamarind, chilly, salt, neem flowers, jaggery, and chips of raw mango.

# Men of Wit - Birbal



Emperor Akbar was famous for his reforms for the welfare of the people. One doubt was, however, nagging him. How many of them were really honest? He posed the question to his lovable courtier one evening.

“That can be easily found out, Shahenshah!” said Birbal, after appearing to be racking his brain for an idea. “First announce a feast for poor people and say that everybody should contribute one pot of milk.”



“But, then, how will we know who is honest and who is not?” asked the emperor, somewhat puzzled. Birbal merely replied: “Sire, please do as I say, and we will have the answer.”



The emperor ordered the announcement to be made: Everybody should bring a pot of milk on a certain day and pour it into a huge vessel kept at the entrance before they entered the palace.





The stipulated day dawned. There was a long line of people carrying a pot of milk each, which they poured into the huge vessel.

After the last man had emptied his pot, a lid was placed over the vessel, which was then carefully lifted and taken to the portico where Akbar, Birbal, and a few other courtiers were waiting.

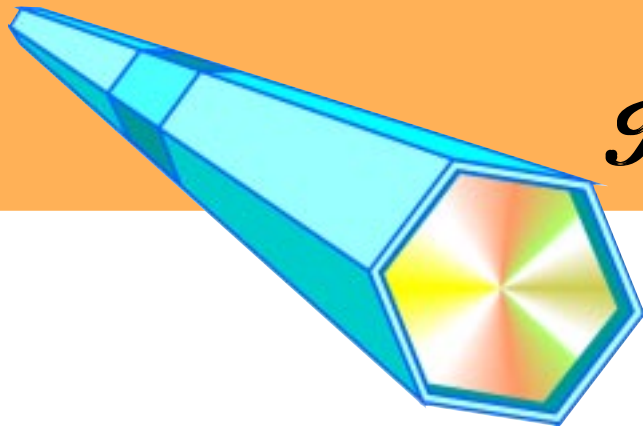


Birbal looked at the emperor and, on receiving a nod, he asked the attendants to remove the lid and take a ladleful of the contents for everybody to see.

“Water!” the emperor gasped. “Yes, your majesty. Like the water, people’s honesty, too, is crystal-clear!”







# Indiascope

## The female bastion

### Going Strong

**W**hat flies up but is controlled from the ground? You don't know? Simple! A kite, of course! All avid kite-flyers know that their string is no ordinary string. It has been glazed with glass dust, which makes it stronger and more difficult to snap.

Legends say that in the 1800s, Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh II of Jaipur and his kite master were flying a kite from the verandah of the palace. They got involved in a fierce contest with another kite. Much to his chagrin, the king's kite was cut by the challenger.

The king was curious. When he enquired, he was told that the unknown victor were two brothers: Chudamani and Kaluram. They were potters who had developed the technique of strengthening their *manja* with glass dust. So, the next time you cut someone's kite with yours, say thanks to Chudamani and Kaluram for their innovation!

**T**his temple in Orissa is different. No, it does not have the tallest tower or the most priceless idol in the whole world. What it has is—women priests! Now, isn't that unique?



Women have been performing the rituals at the 1,300-year-old Panchubarahi temple at Satyabhaya in Orissa's coastal Kendrapara district. Here, male priests not allowed to enter the sanctum sanctorum. The temple rituals are performed entirely by women of the local fisherfolk community called Dalei.



## Arty ancestors



**H**aven't you seen little children scribble and draw on walls? Next time you do, please don't scold them. For, you see, they are only doing what our oldest ancestors had done. You may be surprised to know that our ancestors drew and painted – not on paper, of course, but on the walls of caves!

At Bhimbetka in the Vindhya ranges, near Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, can be found a series of rock caves with

elaborately painted scenes. Historians say that these paintings are more than 10,000 years old.

The paintings show scenes of everyday life of those times, such as hunting, honey gathering, masked dances, animal fights, human riders, and weapons. Many animals like the wild boar, deer, lions, tigers, dogs, and deer are depicted in these paintings. They are mostly in red and white, and show an occasional dash of green and yellow.

## Watered down wrestling

**I**n 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D., there existed in some parts of India a rather peculiar game called *Mall-Stambha*. This was a kind of wrestling, in which the two contestants wrestle while seated on the shoulders of their 'seconds.' And as if that's not enough trouble



for these seconds, they would be standing in waist-deep water throughout the game. Now, think carefully: are these seconds in deep waters or not? They would be, if the wrestlers are of the 'sumo' type, each weighing nothing less than 130 kg!

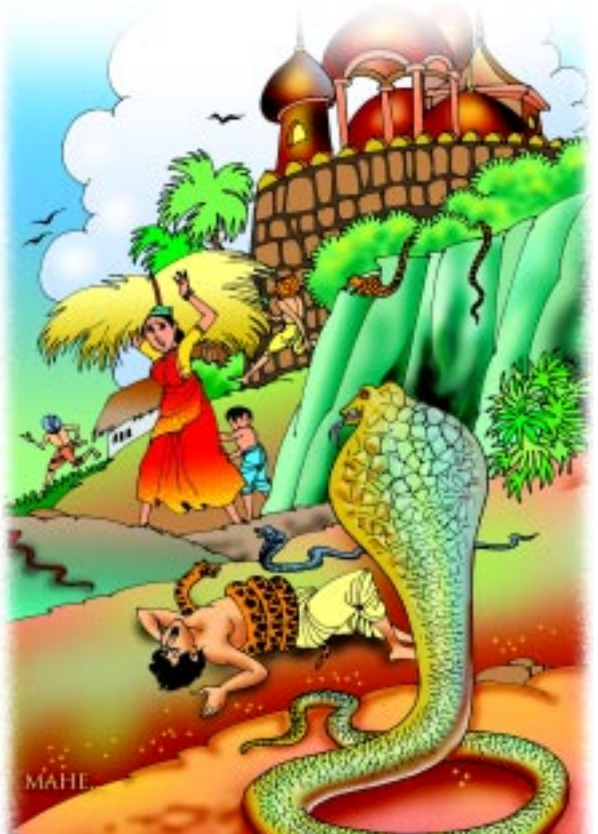
## *A folk tale from Karnataka*

*Karnataka extends over 192,000 sq. km on the western side of the Deccan Plateau. It is bounded by Andhra Pradesh in the east, Maharashtra in the north and Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the south. It accounts for a sixteenth of the landmass of India and has a population of about 52 million. The people of Karnataka are called Kannadigas and they speak Kannada. While some scholars say that the State derives its name from 'Kari-nadu' meaning the land of black soil, others hold that the name actually means 'Karunadu' or beautiful country.*

*The capital is Bangalore, which is recognized all over the country today as India's science city. It is also called the electronics city, because most of the country's big electronic industries are based here. It is the fastest growing city in Asia.*

## *The Jasmine Princess*

The river Kaveri begins its course from a small spring on a hill in the Western ghats and then flows through a land full of forests, green fields and gardens, where jasmines, roses and other beautiful flowers grow. A long time ago, a king ruled over the area. The kingdom was once infested with snakes





and the people were greatly troubled. The king was at his wit's end and did not know what to do. He had a handsome and able son who offered to solve the problem. He went out into the forests to hunt and kill all the snakes he could find.

One day, after a hunt for snakes, the tired prince lay down under a large tree and went to sleep while his retinue kept a watch. Just then a large seven headed snake climbed down from the branches of the tree and made its way towards the prince. The servants



guarding the prince drew their swords to cut the snake into bits when the prince opened his eyes and looked right into the yellow eyes of the snake. What he saw made him shout, “*Nillu*, don’t kill this noble *Elu hedeya sarpa*. Its eyes are full of pain and it surely wants to tell me something!”

He then turned to the snake and asked softly, “*Nanu ninagenu sahaya madali?* O noble snake?”

Somehow he was not surprised when the snake addressed him in a human voice.

“*Yuvaraja*,” it said, “for seven terrible years I have had a stinging headache. Nothing seems to cure it. The pain is so great that I haven’t been able

to control the snakes in this land. I’m their king. You will help me, won’t you?”

“Tell me what I should do,” said the prince in turn.

“About seven *yojanas* (one *yojana* is 4 *krosas*; about 8 or 9 miles) south of your kingdom is another kingdom. The king there has a lovely and delicate daughter who barely weighs as much as seven *Mallige* flowers. The *mallige yuvarani* has never laughed or smiled. When she does laugh, three jasmine flowers will drop from her mouth, and if I can smell the second one, my headache will disappear. I shall see that my subjects do not trouble your kingdom again. Will you get that flower for me?”

## History

Karnataka has been mentioned in history since the times of Chandragupta Maurya, circa 300 B.C. It is believed that towards the end of his life, Emperor Chandragupta Maurya renounced his kingdom, converted to Jainism, and retreated to Shravanabelagola in Karnataka. Many centuries later, the 17 metre tall statue of Gomateshwara was erected at Shravanabelagola.



The prince at once said he would try to meet the Jasmine Princess and make her laugh, and set off for the kingdom in the south, after sending word to his parents. As he travelled, he came to a large clear lake. When he leaned over to quench his thirst, he saw

that a whole nest of *iruvegalu* had fallen into the water. “*Papa badaprani*,” he said and quickly untying his turban, he picked up the whole nest before the ants could drown, and placed the nest on the bank.

“*Nimage dhanyavaada, Yuvaraja*,”

said the ants in a chorus of tiny voices. “If you ever need us, just think of us and we will be there to help you.”

As the prince pressed on into the dense part of the forest, he heard a sort of strangled sound. When he went close to where the sound had come from, he found that it was a huge rakshasa lying pinned to the ground by a large *hunise mara*. Apparently when the giant was sleeping with

Chandamama



his mouth open, a crow had dropped a tamarind seed which had grown into a huge tree. By the time the giant awoke, some of the protruding roots had entwined his body. The poor giant could not get up or move and lay there groaning and shouting in that strangled voice. The prince cut off the roots with his sharp sword and helped the giant get up. The rakshasa was really grateful.

“I don’t know what I would have done if you hadn’t come. Just think of me when you are in trouble and I’ll be there in a trice to help you,” he declared.

Soon afterwards, the prince reached the outskirts of the kingdom he was heading to without getting into any more adventures. He set up camp there and sent word to the king that he was the prince of the kingdom to the north and he had come to seek the hand of the Jasmine Princess. The king was very pleased to hear that a handsome and able prince had come wishing to marry his daughter. He went up to the outskirts of the city to welcome the prince and escort him to his palace.

“You do look like a prince worthy of my daughter, but the custom in our family is that you’ve to complete three tasks before you can win her hand. They are just three small tasks!”

The handsome and able prince was not one to say no to any challenge; so

he asked what the three tasks were. “Well,” said the king, “you’ve to first separate a pile of *akki* mixed with *uddu* in one of our barns, in one night. After you finish this task, I’ll tell you what the next one is.”

## Flora



Karnataka is famous for coffee that is cultivated in Coorg and Chikmagalur. Shimoga is the leading producer of the best arecanut in the world.

Karnataka is known for the many perfumed flowers and trees that grow well here, like the yellow champaka or sampige, the jasmine (mallige), jackfruit and sandalwood.

Spices like cardamom and pepper grow in abundance all across the forest of Malnad.



The prince went into the barn. He saw a huge pile that practically reached the ceiling. As he wondered what to do, he suddenly remembered the ants. No sooner had he done that than an army of ants arrived. Without even waiting for him to say anything, they busily set about separating the *akki* from the *uddu*. Before the night was half over, two neat piles, one of rice and the other *uddu*, stood in the barn.

Next morning the king came to see how the prince was faring. He was surprised and pleased to see that the job was done. “Very good!” said the king. “And now you must eat a hundred *pallas* of *anna* mixed with a hundred measures of *majjige*.”

This time the prince thought of the rakshasa who at once appeared and ate up all the rice and downed the buttermilk. He got up smacking his huge lips and smiling that he had been of help to the prince.

The next task was to ring a golden bell that could be heard in seven kingdoms around the hill on which it had been placed. The prince went and stood on top of the hill and once more thought of the giant. He came at once and asked, “*Igenu?*”

The prince said, “O good rakshasa! Could you ring this *gante* loudly?”

The giant at once seized the rope and rang the bell. The ring could be heard in the seven kingdoms around. Of course, the king too heard it and at once made arrangements for a grand wedding. After the wedding the royal couple, loaded with gifts, left for the prince’s kingdom at the head of a grand procession.

On the way, they passed a village fair with some acrobats and their trained *kapigalu*.

“*Adu enu?*” asked the princess, who weighed only as much as seven jasmynes. She had been brought up like

## Arts and crafts

The Gudigaras of Sorab, Sagar and Kumta regions are known for their intricate carvings in sandalwood and ivory. The most well-known crafts of Karnataka are sandalwood carving, inlay work on rosewood, bidriware, lacquerware, terracottas, and perfumery. The state is also famous for its silk industry.





a delicate flower and had not seen anything like this in her life.

“Come and see,” said the prince getting off their carriage and leading her to the side of the road where the performers had set up their show.

The Jasmine Princess was very amused to see the monkeys and their tricks. Then she, who had never laughed before, broke into a loud peal of laughter and three jasmine flowers fell out of her mouth. The prince collected them and carefully tucked the middle one into his turban.

On their way home, the prince stopped at the tree where he had met the king of snakes and handed him the jasmine. The snake smelled the flower

## Glossary

*Nillu* - Stop

*Elu hedeya sarpa* - Snake with seven hoods

*Nanu ninagenu sahaya madali?* - What can I do for you ?

*Mallige* - Jasmine

*Yuvarani* - Princess

*Iruvegalu* - Ants

*Papa badaprani* - Oh, poor things

*Nimage dhanyavaada* - Thank you

*Hunise mara* - Tamarind tree

*Akki* - Rice

*Uddu* - Black gram

*Anna* - Cooked rice

*Pallas* - Measure equal to one quintal

*Majjige* - Buttermilk

*Gante* - Bell

*Igenu* - Now what?

*Kapigalu* - Monkeys

*Adu enu?* - What's that?

and immediately felt better. He gave the prince a lovely gem with these words: “If ever you need me, just look into this gem.”

Thus the handsome and able prince won his bride, and a lot of friends in the forest who came to his help whenever he was in trouble. His father the king was most pleased and celebrated his return with a grand feast.

**- Retold by Uma Raman**

# NEWS FLASH

## *Tickets to space*

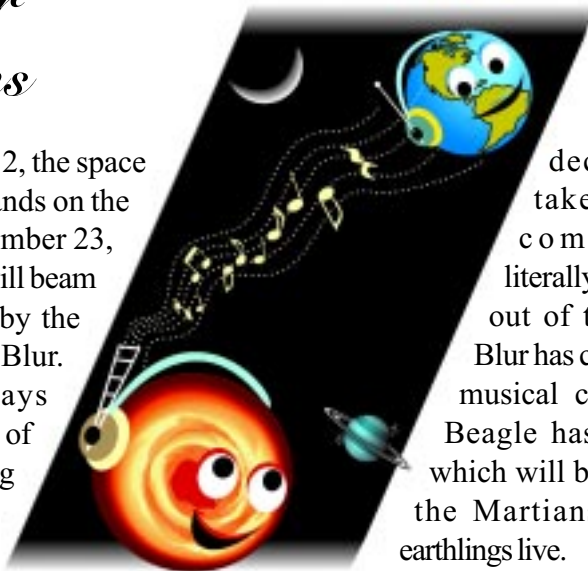


*I*t is almost certain that a second tourist will visit the International Space Station (ISS) in April. Mark

Shuttleworth, a business tycoon of South Africa, has already paid US\$ 20 million for his travel to space. The US space agency NASA, which was not very happy when Dennis Tito of the USA managed a journey to the ISS about a year ago, has now readily come forward to give the necessary training to 28-year-old Shuttleworth. He will undergo training in Russia also before he takes his seat on a Russian rocket. Meanwhile, Britain has released “visa” regulations for those interested in space travel. Habitual users of alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs will not qualify for these visas. Medical fitness will be a must, so also a good knowledge of English!

## *Music for Martians*

*W*hen Beagle 2, the space mission to Mars, lands on the red planet on December 23, 2003, the satellite will beam music composed by the British pop band, Blur. Fans have always described the music of the band as something “out of the world”. The group has now



decided to take the compliment literally and take it out of the world! Blur has composed a musical called “The Beagle has landed”, which will be heard by the Martians and the earthlings live.





## The Story of Ganesa

Just when Lord Siva sent his trident to behead Ganapati who had prevented his entry to his own abode in Kailas, the young boy cried out, “Mother! Mother! Save me!” On hearing the cries, Parvati rushed out and was shocked to see the headless body of her son.

She saw Siva without the trident. “What have you done, my lord?” she burst out angrily. “Do you know that it was our son whom you’ve killed? You could have waited for me till I came.”

Siva’s entourage, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and the thousands of devas and their womenfolk, who were

witnessing the altercation between Siva and Ganapati, were taken aback on seeing Parvati’s anger. They now looked at Siva with consternation as though he had committed a grave mistake.

Siva, too, was upset. “Did you say he was our son?” he asked, turning to Parvati. “Tell me, how did he become *our* son, that too without my knowledge?”

Parvati then told him how she had created a figure out of the powder she was using for her bath and how it had assumed the form of Ganapati, and how she had asked him to guard the

### 4. Divinity revealed



entrance while she was away at her bath.

Lord Siva appeared not convinced. “He could have been *your* son! That’s why he cried out ‘Mother! Mother!’ How can you say he was *our* son? How could he be *my* son?”

Now it was Parvati’s turn to be upset. Her face went pale. On a nod from Lord Vishnu, Lord Brahma went up to Siva and said: “When you held Parvati’s hand at your marriage, you had become one with her. So, Ganapati belonged to both of you.”

Siva saw Parvati weeping over the headless body of Ganapati and wanted to console her. Suddenly, a voice was heard from the skies. It was the voice

of Ganapati. “If the head of anyone who is asleep with his face turned to the north were to be attached to my body, I shall come back to life!”

At once the devas started out to search for such a person. They searched everywhere, but did not come across anyone sleeping with his head facing the north. Then they came to know that a white elephant in the forests of Sahyadri mountains was sleeping with its head in the north. It was Gajendra, son of the celestial elephant Airawata, who was the mount of Indra, the lord of Devaloka. When they reached the spot, they found the elephant Gajendra, fast asleep. Even in his sleep, he was murmuring prayers to Lord shiva.

Long back, one day, Gajendra was in deep meditation when Indra passed by. Gajendra did not raise his head or acknowledge the presence of Indra, who was upset about Gajendra’s disregard for him. “Could my mount’s son be so indifferent and audacious?” shouted Indra furiously and abused Gajendra soundly.

Gajendra was disturbed. But he still answered in patient, calm tones. “It is my father’s duty to serve you and he does his duty properly. That doesn’t mean you should insult me. I needn’t be afraid of you.”

“You’re a mere calf, mind you!”  
Indra continued in an angry mood. “Do you know who I am? I’m Indra!”

“Yes, you’re an Indra” said Gajendra, “like many other Indras. Someone is Nagendra, another Pakshindra! In fact, if one were to do *tapas*, anyone can become an Indra! No wonder, you cannot brook someone doing *tapas*.”

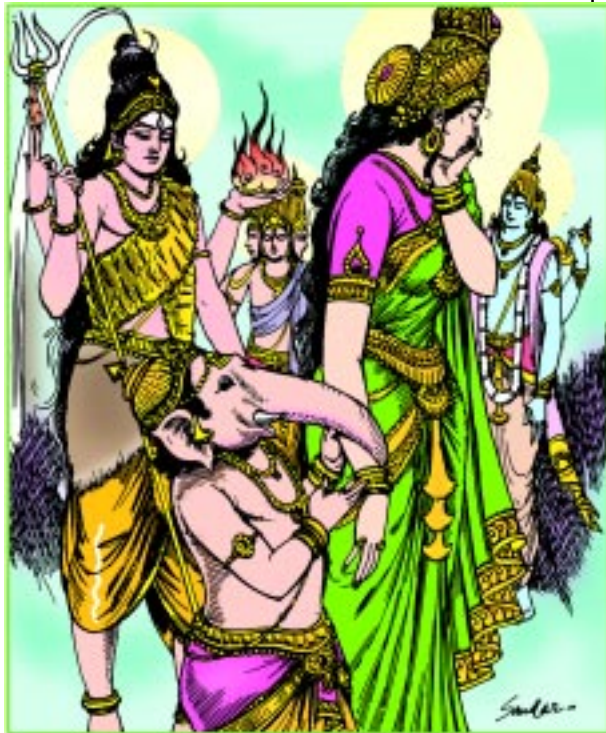
Indra’s anger increased many fold with that snub from Gajendra. He cursed him: “May you be beheaded!”

Gajendra reacted sharply, but smilingly: “Nobody can touch me without Siva’s permission. Remember, a day will come when you will have to bow to me. Who knows what will not happen at that time!”

Unfortunately for Indra, he was unaware of Gajendra’s knowledge and wisdom, for he was too conceited about his own exalted position in Devaloka. “All right, you may continue to meditate on Siva, but right now I’m sending you down to the earth!”

Indra then gave a push to Gajendra, who fell down and landed in the Sahyadri mountains where he continued to worship Siva. As it is believed that Lord Shiva resided to the north of the Sahyadris, Gajendra always faced the north. He even went to sleep with his head placed in the north.

Chandamama



When the devas came there in search of someone asleep with his head facing the north, they cut off Gajendra’s head and attached it to the truncated trunk of Ganapati, who now got back his life. He was smiling and he looked happy.

“Must my beloved son put up with an elephant’s head?” wailed Parvati. She could not bear the sight and closed her eyes.

Ganapati tried to console her. In a sweet voice he said: “Mother, why do you grieve when everything has ended happily? Do you recall that day when you and my father both saw a painting on the wall as you were going round the palace built for you by





Viswakarma? That picture showed two elephants and you both were appreciating the details. I had appeared in that painting. I am the same Vighneswara.”

Parvati immediately recollected the incident. Lord Siva then said, apologetically, “So, Vighneshwara, you’ve born as our son! I’m sorry I was angry with you!”

“All right, but tell me, how are you going to fulfil your promise to Gajasura?” Ganapati reminded Siva.

“Yes, I haven’t forgotten,” said Siva. He then draped himself in an elephant skin. With folded hands, Siva said: “O Vighneshwara! Please show me your divine form!”

Shiva then turned to Ganapati and said, “Vighneshwar, do show us your real form!”

Suddenly, Ganapati turned into a huge figure with five heads. The heads represented the five elements—earth, water, fire, wind, and the sky, and they appeared in five different colours—green, grey, red, blue, and white. On his heads, shone the stars and planets and they looked bright and beautiful as the flowers. Vighneshwara’s big belly seemed to span the entire sky.

Vighneshwara held in his hands a goad, rope, and a vessel, besides conch, chakra (disc), trident, a necklace of beads, veena, sword, and a spear—all symbols of the Trimurthis. Those who saw this magnificent radiant form of Lord Vighneshwara were dazzled by His brilliance and they were forced to avert their eyes. And yet they were filled with a strange joy that they could not explain. Saraswathi picked up her veena and softly played His favourite Raga Hamsadhwani. Sage Narada renewed the melodious Raga Mayamalavagoula.

Siva was mightily pleased and he danced the Ananda Tandava or the Dance of Joy.

All this was being eagerly watched by the devas and their womenfolk, and Indra. He now recognised the head of



Gajendra on Ganapati. He remembered the words that Gajendra had uttered that fateful day: “Remember, a day will come when you will have to bow to me. Who knows what will not happen at that time!” In repentance, he caught hold of his ears with both hands and expressed regret for having insulted Gajendra. He prostrated before Ganapati and said: “Please forgive me, O Gajendra! I had thought too much of myself. You’re the personification of wisdom and knowledge.”

Then Shiva said, “Please tell us about your various forms.”

“This world is a community of the devotees of Shiva. Parvati and Siva are

the mother and father of the universe,” explained Vighneswara. “I’m their son, and I bow to them.”

Lord Brahma interjected and said, “When Vishnu took the form of the fish (matsyavatara) and killed Somakasura and retrieved the Vedas from him, he meditated on Vighneswara and handed them to me. They gave me the knowledge needed for creation. That was when I first learnt about the many qualities of Vighneshwara. And I, too, meditated on Vighneswara while I began creation.”

Everybody was now listening to Brahma with rapt attention. He continued: “Vighneshwara is the entire creation by himself. As he is the perfect

blending of the five ganas or elements - sky, air, fire, water and earth - he is also called Mahaganapati. Around Vighneshwar are the goddesses Lakshmi and Saraswathi. Ganapati's elephant head is symbolic of mental power as well as physical power. That is manifested in his huge figure. At the same time, he is able to travel on his mount, the tiny mouse. The elephant head is endowed with small eyes, but they are powerful enough to see even the minutest of things. This shows, nothing escapes the eyes of Ganapati. His large ears are capable of listening to people's prayers from every corner of the universe. Similarly, his long trunk can reach anything that he wants. He thus possesses the wealth of the world. Anyone wishing to achieve anything has to worship Vighneshwara first."

He continued: "Vighneshwar is said to be a lover of food. Food is essential for the growth and development of any

body. Only when one is healthy can one develop mentally and intellectually. That is why Lord Vighneshwara is often shown as accepting fruits, sweets and other food items with pleasure.

It is in the month of Bhadrapada that Vighneshwara came into being. That is why it is said that those who worship Him on the Shukla Paksha Chaturthi of the month of Bhadrapada, will get all that they desire. They will be blessed with the strength and courage to face any hurdle that may cross their path."

"If that be the case," said Lord Siva, "then it is only proper that we all worship Vighneshwara before we do anything else."

On hearing this, Parvati went forward to pay her obeisance to Ganapati. He suddenly stood up and stopped her from prostrating. "You should not; you're my Mother."

**(To continue)**





# Garuda the Invincible

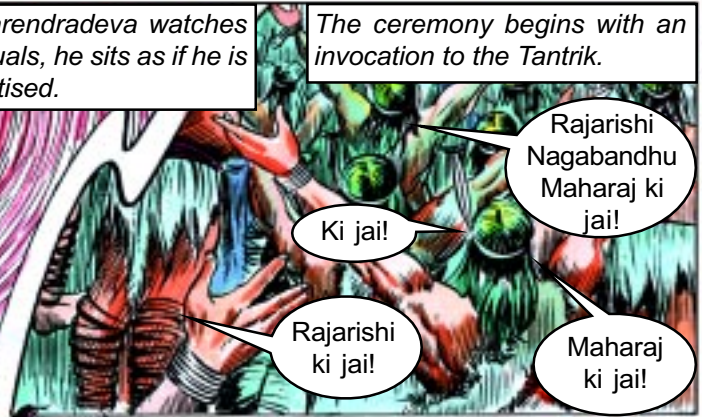
14

Art : PAANI

Commander Narendradeva of Chandrapuri goes to the temple near the mountain caves to meet Tantrik Nagabandhu, in the company of the Oracle. He hopes to learn something about the missing king. The Tantrik asks him to sit by his side and watch the ceremony.



As Narendradeva watches the rituals, he sits as if he is hypnotised.



The ceremony begins with an invocation to the Tantrik.

Rajarishi Nagabandhu Maharaj ki jai!

Ki jai!

Rajarishi ki jai!

Maharaj ki jai!



Jai!

Jai! Jai!! Nagabandhu Maharaj!

Jai! Jai!!

The devotees dance as if in a trance. They dance around a youth dressed like an eagle.















## Oddity of sic-ness!

- ❁ Very often I come across the word ‘sic’ in the middle of a sentence or at the end, but always within brackets. What does that mean? asks reader *K.S. Padmakumar of Kollam, Kerala*.

See this sentence: “The charity show was really fun(sic)raising.” When something is being quoted, the expression “(sic)” is added to show that there is some oddity about it, and it is being quoted exactly as it is said or written. In the above sentence, what is actually meant is, the charity show was intended to raise funds, though the performance was funny and was capable of raising enough fun! Other examples: No smokeing (sic); the skool (sic) reopens in June. Fortunately, this happens very rarely; otherwise any reader will become sick of it!

- ❁ The other day, a VIP was being interviewed. After sometime, he cautioned the reporter that what he would be saying would be “off the cuff”. What did he mean by that? queries *Rajasekhara Murthy of Perianaickenpalayam*.

The gentleman was trying to say something spontaneous, without taking time to think about the question put to him; or he was not expected to make a remark on that particular topic, hinting that he was not fully qualified to speak on that subject. He was also alerting the reporter that what he would say was not to appear in print. Those speakers who prefer to make speeches extempore sometimes carry bits of paper with points written down and hide them in the folds of their shirt cuffs to be pulled out for a quick glance whenever necessary. Off the cuff, literally!

# THE WEIRD SPECTRE ON THE SEA

**D**o you believe in ghosts? No ordinary ghosts, but eerie spectres of sailing ships?

Almost 500 years ago, in the early 17th century, so runs the legend, a Dutch captain, Hendrik Vanderdecken, set sail from Amsterdam. A greedy and stubborn man, he was determined to make a fortune on this voyage.

All went well, until the ship approached the southern tip of Africa. Then, as it began to go round the dangerous waters of the Cape of Good Hope, the vessel was suddenly engulfed by a howling storm. For days the fierce waves battered it.

The terrified passengers pleaded with their captain to lower the sails, ride out of the storm, and find a safe port. But alas, the arrogant and violent skipper only laughed at their entreaties. Then lashing himself onto the navigating wheel, he heartlessly pursued his course. He drank and smoked and paused to fill the air with terrible curses.

"I will go round the Cape even if I have to keep sailing until doomsday!"

he screamed, challenging the fury of the nature.

The crew members were alarmed and attempted to take control of the ship. But the plan failed when the robust and angry captain hurled their ring leader into the sea. There was nothing more that the helpless passengers and crew could do, but pray and await their fate.

Amazingly, as if in answer to their prayers, the storm clouds parted and the entire deck was covered with a bright light. Out of the luminosity emerged a strange and glorious figure. It confronted the mad captain and told him in a voice loud and clear: "Since you take pleasure in tormenting your fellowmen, you are condemned

to sail forever in the grip of a storm, without rest and without ever making land. You will also bring doom to all those who lay their eyes on you."

With these words, the apparition disappeared and the passengers and the crew too vanished. Where did they vanish? No one knows! But the solitary captain and his ship were left to sail for eternity.

This is the famous story of the Flying





Dutchman, the name by which the captain of the doomed ship came to be known. The story has been in circulation over the centuries and is perhaps one of the oldest legends of the sea. But is this fact or fiction? Incredibly, it has turned out to be more than a piece of imagination. For, down the centuries there have been several accounts of people who claim to have seen the phantom ship and its ghostly master.

George, Prince of Wales, who later became King George V, reported a sighting of this spectral ship. According to records found in the prince's private letters and notebooks, sometime in 1881, both the lookout man and the officer of the watch of the royal vessel *HMS Bacchante* saw a strange and ghostly ship, lit by a weird red glow, cross their bows. Surprisingly, soon after the sighting, the lookout man fell down from the topmost mast and died. Then the other officer, too, met with a fatal accident.

At the same time, several people aboard two other vessels also are reported to have seen the phantom ship and its reddish light. Whether it was the very vessel of the Flying Dutchman or some other spectre will never be known. But mysteriously, true to the legend, misfortune followed the sighting.

Is it really possible that the ghost of the Dutch captain and his phantom ship still haunt the high seas, heralding



disaster to all those who set their eyes on them?

Karl Donitz, commander-in-chief of the German navy and who had briefly succeeded Hitler, claimed that he had come across the phantom ship during one of his voyages. He is reported to have remarked later that he would rather face the combined might of the Allied Fleet than experience the horror of seeing the Flying Dutchman's ship.

The legend of the Flying Dutchman has inspired several poets and writers. Among them are the American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the German lyric poet, Heinrich Heine, Frederick Marryat, and Sir Walter Scott. Its fascination has been so strong that many movies and television films based on the theme are being made to this day.

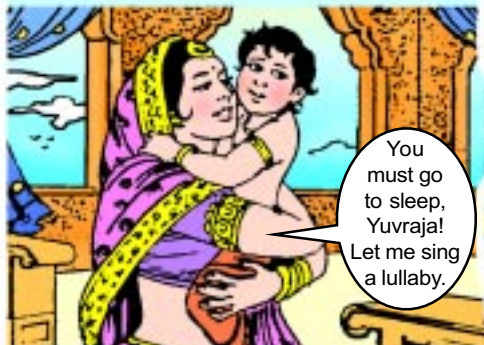
Could this unusual tale be true? If not, what spectres did the host of eyewitnesses see?

**(This series concluded)**

## Women who made history

## PANNA

Vikramjit succeeded Rana Sanga, who was an illustrious ruler of Mewar in the early years of the 16th century. Uday, the little prince, was very much attached to the maid, Panna.



Vikramjit had become the ruler as his elder brother had earlier died on the battle-field. He had no interest in ruling the land, and spent most of his time in the company of dancers and musicians.



The Mughals of Delhi had an eye on Mewar. They engineered a conspiracy among the courtiers, who found a leader in Banveer, a relation of Vikramjit.

Banveer waited for an opportunity for a face-to-face encounter with Vikramjit.



The palace was rocked when the news came of Vikramjit's end and of the impending arrival of Banveer. There was loud wailing and weeping.

Panna rushed back to where the prince and her own son of the same age were sleeping. She was in a dilemma.





Panna took a decision, and fast, too. She called one of the servants.

When the basket was brought, Panna placed the prince in it after changing his royal clothes.



Panna was certain that Banveer would come for the prince. She lifted her son from his bed, dressed him in the prince's clothes, and placed him in the royal bed.

In the next few moments, Panna heard heavy steps. It was Banveer. He had already drawn the sword.



Panna hesitated, but only for a moment. She pointed to the bed where her son was asleep. She turned her head away so as not to be a witness to the dastardly act.

Panna ran out of the palace and reached the riverside where the faithful servant was waiting with the prince. He was taken to the fort at Komulmer where he grew up and ultimately drove away Banveer from Mewar.





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★ *Why is the Dead Sea so called?*

- **K.S.Ramappa, Kolar**

The Dead Sea is a vast lake lying between Israel and Jordan. It is 46 miles long and 10 miles wide, and it is the only lake in the world which lies below the sea level (1,300 ft). The water is so salty that no life exists in the lake. It is said, even birds avoid flying over the lake.

★ *What is the Hippocratic Oath?*

- **V.Sulakshana, Kanhangad**

For every profession, there is a set of rules or a code of conduct, and those who follow the profession are expected to abide by the rules. For the medical profession, there is the Hippocratic Oath which the medical graduates have to take before they are formally inducted into the profession. The oath binding doctors to observe the medical code of ethics is named after Hippocrates who lived some 2,400 years ago. This Greek physician came to be known as the “father of medicine”. He drew up the code which enjoins upon every doctor to have deep respect for his or her profession and patients, to administer medicine for the benefit of the patients, not to give deadly medicine even if it is asked for, and not to divulge the details of the patient’s malady to another.

★ *Frogs are not generally seen climbing trees. Are there tree frogs?*

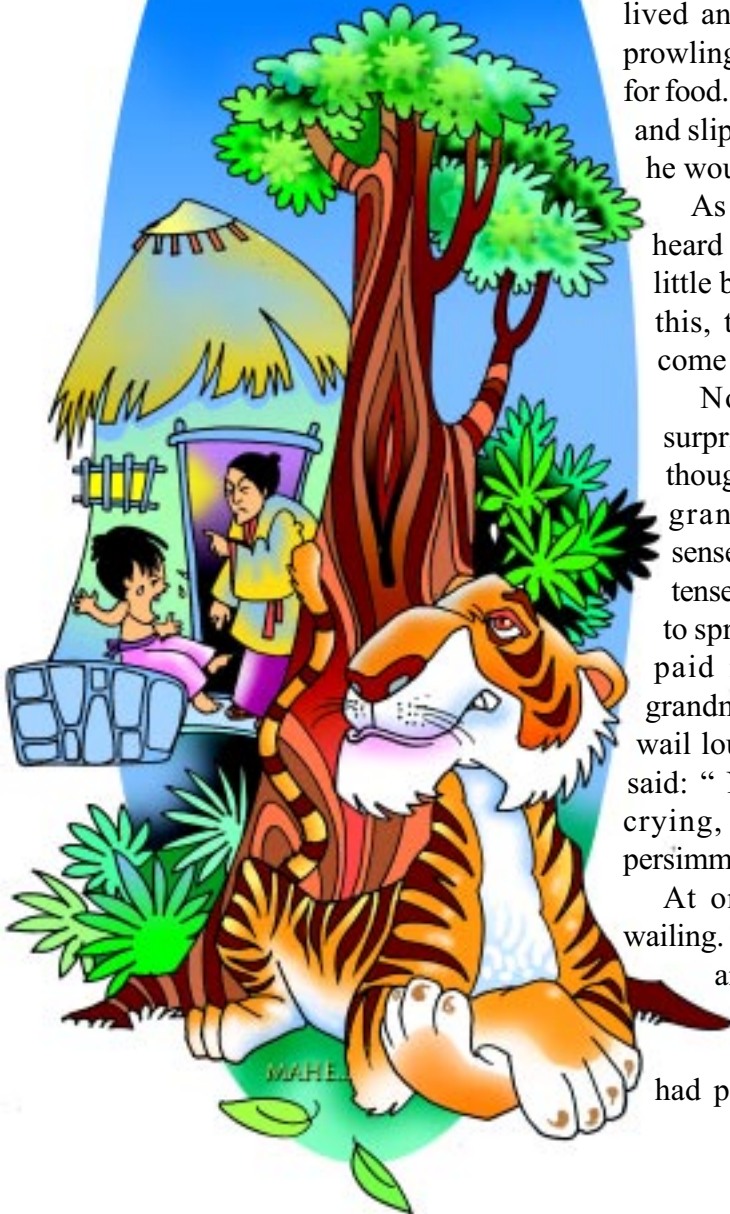
- **S.K.Balachander, Mandya**

Frogs found in Europe, the Americas, and North Africa are capable of climbing trees. They possess sticky disc-like parts on the top of their fingers and toes which help them climb and cling to tree branches. Because of their habitat, they are green in colour, but they are capable of changing it to brown, black, or yellow to suit the surroundings. Their croaks are quite loud.

**This may interest you!**

When you celebrate your birthday, you may remember that approximately 9,000,000 others also will be celebrating their birthday that very day!

# The tiger and the persimmon



Once upon a time, a long time ago, when tigers used to smoke, a little boy lived with his grandmother in the faraway land of Korea. One evening, for some reason he felt very unhappy and started crying.

At that very time a tiger, which lived and hunted in that area, was prowling around the village looking for food. He heard the little boy crying and slipped into that house thinking he would get a tasty morsel there.

As he entered the courtyard, he heard the grandmother say to the little boy: "If you keep crying like this, the nasty striped tiger will come to get you!"

Now, the tiger was very surprised to hear this. He thought, though he had been very quiet, the grandmother had somehow sensed his presence. Therefore, he tensed on his haunches quite ready to spring. The little boy, however, paid no attention to what the grandmother said and continued to wail loudly. The grandmother then said: "Now little one, if you stop crying, I shall give you a dried persimmon."

At once the child stopped his wailing. This really surprised the tiger and he stopped in mid spring.

When the old woman mentioned a tiger, the boy had paid no heed, but when she

Chandamama



spoke of a dried persimmon, the crying stopped at once! So a dried persimmon must really be something frightful, reasoned the tiger. He turned around to slip away quietly before the persimmon could get him.

As chance would have it, at that very moment, a thief broke into the house, wanting to steal a cow. It was dark and the unsuspecting thief grabbed the tail of what he felt was that of a cow. The tiger, already worried about the dried persimmon, was convinced it was indeed that fierce creature which had caught hold of his tail. Without turning to look and

see what it actually was, the tiger jumped over the gate and started running towards the forest in a panic-stricken bid to escape.

Meanwhile, the thief, too, was terrified. He realised that he had somehow caught hold of a tiger by its tail. He was too scared to let go and held on in terror as the animal streaked across the countryside. Finally, he could hang on no longer and fell by the wayside. Still, the tiger did not stop running. He ran till he was very, very far away from the village and was quite sure that the fierce persimmon would not grab him by the tail.

***- Retold by Uma Raman***



# WHO SAYS SUMMER IS ALL SWEAT AND GRIME?

*Why should tempers rise along with temperatures?*

**SHRUG OFF THE BLAZING SUN!**

*Forget the parched throats!*



*Tushar and Trisha had a great holiday last summer.  
You might have read of it in Chandamama last May.*

***This May,** they learn  
how to enjoy the Indian  
summer - the Indian way.  
Join them in their  
exciting adventures.*

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**Reader Jyotiranjana Biswal of Durgapur has this comment to make on our February editorial:**

You have very correctly pointed out that “terrorist activities are only manifestations of a diseased mind which indulges in dangerous play.” Undoubtedly, terrorism is the most dreaded scourge human civilisation is facing today. The younger generation should imbibe nobler traits like love and compassion. And *Chandamama* is doing its bit in this direction through its colourful, exhortative stories as well as editorials.

**Reader L. Ashalatha writes from Tirupati:**

Thank you for re-starting *Chandamama*. *Chandamama* makes us feel that we are still children, no matter how old we may be. Please don't stop the General knowledge section in the magazine. I am surprised at the feedback of people who do not want such features. I find them very interesting. I am myself surprised how little I know about my country and how vast its culture and traditions are. *Chandamama* is doing good service by presenting such interesting facts about our country.

**By e-mail, from Naveen Santapur:**

I started reading *Chandamama* when I was in the 8th Standard and now I am an engineering student. It provides good entertainment for a person like me who would prefer to read books rather than watch TV. I would request you to include more stories.



✉ “For the first time, I came across your website. It is very impressive.”

-Vinatha Kandikattu, Arlington, USA

✉ “Just now I visited your website. It was fascinating. The design is excellent and the accessibility remarkable.” - I.J. Rao

✉ “Your website is very good and looks quite impressive. This is a great service you are doing to the nation. *Chandamama* is doing a great job in educating the younger generation and also the elders by providing a wonderful form of entertainment clubbed with knowledge.”

- Vinod R. Polavajram







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to reach us before the 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

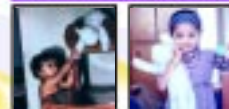
*Congratulations*

The Prize for the February 2002  
contest goes to

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Printed and Published by B. Viswanatha Reddi at B.N.K. Press Pvt. Ltd., Chennai - 600 026 on behalf of Chandamama India Limited, No. 82, Defence Officers Colony, Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097. Editor : Viswam

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